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that from a million to a million and a half would be about correct. His own estimate was a million and a half.

Colonel WALKER said that was very near the estimate he had made. While he was in Peking the behaviour of the much maligned British soldier was so creditable that after the troops had been there about three weeks the people flocked into the city to an extent which might be called, not an *exodus* but an *inodus*; and it was afterwards said by the inhabitants, "You barbarians have been six weeks here, and no poor man has lost to the value of a farthing." Mr. Lockhart had adverted to the burning of the palace. That was simply a punishment to the emperor. It was his pet palace—the apple of his eye. The palace was burned without a single blow being inflicted on any Chinese, the only sufferer being the emperor himself, he being the instigator of the outrage which the burning of the palace was intended to avenge, as was proved by a letter under his own hand, which was discovered. Mr. Lockhart mentioned a very remarkable bell belonging to a large temple. He (Colonel Walker) was not sure that he was not the discoverer of that bell, having met with it in one of his morning rides. It was 9 feet high and 14 feet in circumference. The temple lay a short distance outside of Peking; and some idea of its size may be formed from the fact that it was intended to use it as the winter quarters of the whole of the British cavalry and infantry at Peking. He might mention, for the purpose of showing the state of Chinese civilization, that he found a printing-press with wood types in the city of Peking. No doubt China had been civilized for more than a thousand years, but their civilization was not of an advancing kind. The wall of Peking was 40 feet broad on the top, and allowed not only the passage of cavalry, but also of guns along it. Of all the dreary and filthy cities he had ever visited Peking was the dreariest and most filthy. The streets were very broad, but they were either knee-deep in mud or ankle-deep in dust, and the dust was very much of the same blue coaly colour as that of Aldershot.

2. *Notes of Travel in the Peninsula of Sinai.* By the Rev. F. W. HOLLAND.

MR. HOLLAND visited the Peninsula of Sinai in 1861, and again in 1865, travelling, on the latter occasion, with two friends, on foot and without a dragoman, so that he was able to diverge from the beaten paths, and examine many places that had previously escaped notice. In 1865 he left Suez, on the 22nd of February, and encamped that evening at Ayun Musa, which the writer of the article on "the Wilderness of the Wandering," in Dr. Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' has confounded with the wells of a similar name near Tor, and consequently tries in vain to reconcile the accounts of different travellers. Next day the party diverged from the usual track about eight miles south of Ayun Musa, and kept along the coast, where they found a considerable tract of land covered with grass, shrubs, and thickets of tamarisk. The most fertile portion is called Wady El Ahthi. On the 28th the party arrived at Wady Mughâra, where they were most hospitably received by Major McDonald, who had established himself there five years before, that he might re-open

and work the turquoise-mines of the ancient Egyptians. Mr. Holland counted, on the rocks around, no less than 32 hieroglyphic tablets, and concluded that the mines were probably worked by captives. On a hill overlooking them are the ruins of what was evidently a strong military position, from which run two walls across the intervening valley, so as to inclose the captive miners. Several excursions were afterwards made from Wady Feiran, one to the top of Mount Serbal, where Mr. Holland had an opportunity of verifying Burckhardt's statement as to the number of inscriptions on the rocks; and on another he discovered, on a high sugar-loaf-shaped mountain, some very interesting ruins. This mountain was accessible only on the southern side; here were the remains of steps cleverly built up of rough stones, many of them of large size, so as to form a sort of zigzag staircase. On reaching the summit he found that it was admirably fortified. The approach was protected by several cross walls, with narrow doorways, and was made to wind in such a manner as to expose an attacking party to the darts of the besieged. Near the centre were the ruins of four square chambers, each measuring nearly 14 by 20 feet, the walls of which were 2 feet in thickness; and remains of other chambers and cisterns were observed. From amongst a quantity of broken pottery Mr. Holland picked up a small piece with three letters, closely resembling Himyaritic, inscribed upon it. The name of the Mount is Jebel Solar. On another day, while at Feiran, he discovered the track of an ancient road, and traced it for some miles across a narrow pass between the mountains of Afreet and Serbal, and down Wady Buk-sáah. On questioning the Arabs, he found that they knew two kinds of roads in the peninsula,—the "Camel Road," and the "Mountain Road,"—the latter of which they all described as having been made by the ancients. Mr. Holland's curiosity being excited, he spent a whole week with an Arab guide in tracing these ancient roads. The road which crossed the mountains to the south of Jebel Solar was called by his guide "Sicca Solar;" and another, which apparently led to the top of Jebel Serbal, he called "Sicca Lahm." In some places these roads showed considerable engineering skill in the way in which they are carried along the precipitous mountain side.

At Wady Mughára, and at Surabit el Khadim, Mr. Holland could find no traces of copper-mines, and believed that turquoises were the only objects of the miners, who were most probably Egyptians; worked flints were found at both places. Jebel Umshaumer had long been supposed to be the highest mountain in the peninsula, but Mr. Holland's aneroid proved Jebel Catherine to be higher by 33 feet; the height of the former being 8030 feet, that of the latter

8063 feet. The author also gave the result of his investigation of the various routes supposed to have been taken by the Israelites from the Egyptian side of the Red Sea to Jebel Musa, and gave in detail the grounds on which he had come to a slightly different opinion on this subject from previous writers. With regard to Sinaitic inscriptions, Mr. Holland paid especial attention to them, and found their extent to have been much underrated. He believed that a thorough investigation of them would give a key to the character and history of the writers. His own observations led him to the conclusion that they were not the work of mere casual pilgrims or travellers, but of a settled people who lived in the central granitic district, especially in the neighbourhood of Jebel Serbal, and who made the "mountain roads."

The PRESIDENT said he was sure the Meeting had heard with great interest Mr. Holland's description of the Peninsula of Sinai, for it was the result of much personal exertion, including long journeys on foot, made under considerable privations. Having taken a great interest in the exploration of Palestine and the augmentation of the Palestine Fund, he was happy to find that the author had concluded his very remarkable paper by a pertinent allusion to that subject. He was also very glad to observe that the Archbishop of York was present, as his Grace had taken the lead in promoting the exploration of Palestine.

The ARCHBISHOP OF YORK had listened to the paper with great interest, as he was sure all present must have done. He did not think that the period had been reached when inferences might safely be drawn on many points connected with ancient and sacred history. It was commonly assumed that Palestine was a well-known country, but he believed that assumption to be entirely contrary to the fact. Palestine and the Peninsula of Sinai had not been as yet thoroughly observed and explored, although they had been traversed by one traveller after another upon the old system. We still wanted facts more than inferences. He would mention the name of Mr. Tristram as another observer in the same walk who had lately put forth a most valuable contribution on the subject of Palestine. It was from such men as Mr. Holland and Mr. Tristram that we must learn much before we could safely trust ourselves to make inferences of the character which some had made—inferences, let him say, which it was easier to make than facts were easy to observe. He hoped it would be remembered, after the allusions which had been made to the subject, that the Palestine Exploration Fund was a sort of younger sister of the Geographical Society, its business being to send persons to collect facts to enable us by-and-by to make sounder deductions and better inferences, and thus avoid the confused ideas which now disfigured our discussions on the subject of Palestine.

Eleventh Meeting, 14th May, 1866.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, BART., K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*George W. Bacon, Esq.; the Hon. George Campbell; William Gillespie, Esq.; Lieut. Brownlow Villiers Layard; Captain John*